

Top Soviet KGB Agent Is Linked To London Hassle

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John O. Koehler was Associated Press correspondent in Germany, when the American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers and Col. Rudolf Abel, convicted in the United States as a Soviet spy, were exchanged.

By John O. Koehler

NEW YORK (AP) — The mystery Russian official involved in the recent hassle over a young Soviet scientist in London was identified Friday as the top secret police agent who handled the release of American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers.

"I positively identify the man as Ivan Alexandrovitch Schischkin with whom I negotiated the exchange of Powers and Col. Abel," New

York attorney James B. Donovan said.

Donovan revealed that U.S. intelligence officials believe Schischkin to be the head of operations in Western Europe for KGB, the Soviet secret police.

"They are obviously using him on their top cases," Donovan told the Associated Press.

Schischkin's name cropped up in London Sept. 16 when British police pulled Dr. Vladimir Tkachenko off a Moscow-bound Soviet airliner, charging the physicist had been drugged and kidnaped.

Tkachenko, 25, had been studying in Britain. He was observed being forced into a car identified as belonging to the Soviet Embassy in London. He was driven to the airport. Scotland Yard was alert-

ed and the departure was stopped.

There was speculation—never confirmed—that the Soviets were trying to forestall what might have become a defection. The Soviets protested angrily, claiming the physicist was a mental case.

Three days later, British authorities released Tkachenko and he was flown to Moscow.

A Soviet official, identified as Consul Ivan S. Shishkin, was said to have arranged the departure. Speculation had it that he was the same man involved in the exchange of Powers for Col. Rudolf Abel, convicted in the United States as a Soviet spy. His last name was spelled differently, however.

This reporter identified Schischkin from a photograph showing two Soviet officials dragging Tkachenko back to

the Soviet Embassy.

We had met many times in West and East Berlin in 1962 and 1963, where Schischkin said he was an assistant press attache at the Soviet Embassy. His business card identified him as a second secretary. It was common knowledge, however, that he was the man who handled the Powers-Abel exchange for the Soviets.

To establish the identity beyond doubt, the photograph was shown to Donovan, who pointed to Schischkin without hesitation.

Donovan, who also handled the release of the men imprisoned in Cuba after the Bay of Pigs invasion, negotiated with Schischkin in East Berlin for more than a week in February, 1962. The lawyer was the court-appointed attorney for Abel.

An indication of Schischkin's stature in the Soviet hierarchy is an incident which occurred in the presence of this reporter at the Soviet Embassy in East Berlin four years ago.

I was waiting for Schischkin in an anteroom. Also in the room was a Soviet army brigadier general. When Schischkin entered, the general stood up and all but snapped to attention. Schischkin dismissed him with a nod. I thought at the time that the general's deference to a "second secretary," of whom there were at least a dozen, was revealing.